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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CUBA, U.S.-HEALTHCARE, GREECE-GERMANY,
EU-GREECE, U.S.-GOOGLE, SUDAN, LATAM, TURKEY, DEFENSE;BERLIN

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¶1. Lead Stories Summary

Primetime newscasts and many newspapers led with stories on the resignation of the head the Protestant Church in Germany, Margot KQmann. Several newspapers led with the dispute within the German coalition government. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung headlined: "Merkel: Westerwelle has unnecessarily made the debate about reforms more difficult." Editorials focused on the Protestant Church.

¶2. (Cuba) Death of a Dissident

Under the headline: Dissidents Starves Himself to Death," Sueddeutsche Zeitung (2/25) wrote that "Orlando Zapata's death is raising new criticism of Cuba's Treatment of Opposition politicians. Since the death of poet and student leader Pedro Luis Boitel in 1972, Zapata is the first prisoner in Cuba who died from a hunger strike. This death notice will impede Spain's most recent efforts to bring the regime of RaQl Castro closer to the EU again." Frankfurter Allgemeine (2/25) reported: "Dissident Died in Prison - Cuban Zapato Tamayo was on a Hunger Strike for 85 Days." Die Welt (2/25) headlined: "Cuban Dissident Died after an 85-day Hunger Strike," while Berliner Zeitung (2/25) reported under the headline: "Death of a Dissident."

Under the headline; "Cuban Prison," Sueddeutsche Zeitung (2/25)

argued in an editorial: "The death of Cuban dissident Orlando Zapata Tamayo is not only a human tragedy but it is a dramatic setback for the nurtured hope for change in Cuba. This looks like a political slap in the face of all those who have built bridges for the Castro brothers over the past years. In Europe, especially the Spanish government must now feel duped.... It tried to get support for a normalization of relations between the EU and Cuba. President Obama has also tried to normalize U.S. relations with Cuba arguing that the confrontational U.S. policy towards Cuba, which lasted for more than 50 years, was a mistake. In view of Zapata's death it is difficult to say that Obama's viewpoint is right. But the regime in Havana is now encouraging those who have an interest in escalating tension. This nourishes the suspicion that the powers-that-be in Cuba have no interest in change. That is why the first consequence from Zapata's death can only be to increase pressure on Havana to such an extent that political prisoners are set free. This has been long overdue."

13. (U.S.) Healthcare Reform Summit

Handelsblatt (2/25) headlined: "Too European For America," and judged: "If a miracle does not happen, President Obama's balance sheet for the mid-term elections will be rather gloomy. The healthcare summit that will begin in Washington today is likely to fail; the financial market regulation will be diluted, sustainable state finances are not in sight and climate protection could be over for the time being. Obama must assume responsibility for this because he is the president and he announced all these correct projects but has not implemented them. This is not necessarily fair but these are the rules of the political business. The external reasons give only a partial explanation for the man in the White

House being unable to succeed. In Congress he has to deal with a Republican Party that its not only arch conservative but which is even rewarded for its obstructionist attitude with election victories. In addition there are governmental mistakes. For much too long, he left the debate over healthcare reform to Congress. But the real truth is much more complex. After one year in office the question must be raised whether Obama's perception of America really coincides with the real picture of the country."

14. (Greece-Germany) Greek Anger at Germany

Sueddeutsche (2/25) headlined: "Greeks Outraged At Germans - Following Critical Reports, Vice Premier Recalls Occupation by the Wehrmacht," and wrote; "Politicians in Athens strongly called upon Germany to hold back with its criticism of the Greek financial crisis. The reason for the anti-German remarks is media reports on the financial crisis, which many Greeks considered insulting. The German Ambassador to Greece, Wolfgang Schulthei, said: 'Anger [at Germany] is great. A wave of outrage is now hitting us. In my view it is justified.' Schulthei called the front-page picture of Focus, which is the main focus of protests 'tasteless.'"

Frankfurter Allgemeine (2/25) carried a front-page report, headlined: "The Anger of Petsalnikos - In Times of Crisis and strike, Athens Discovers Germans who are to Blame," and said: "There is no doubt that Greece is currently under strong pressure from the markets and other European states. This pressure is so strong that nerves are exposed in Athens, for instance, with Philippos Petsalnikos, the president of the Greek parliament and carrier of the German Order of Merit. He studied in Germany and is married to a German. But he is primarily angry at the German media, which are unfair in their treatment of Greece."

In an editorial, Sueddeutsche Zeitung (2/25) headlined: "Fodder for Populists," and wrote: "Both sides are now getting each other worked up, but what is lost is common sense. Yes, the Greek state lied to Europe; and it is understandable to be angry, angry at a system that is threatening to drag down other countries. And yes, in Germany, there is the freedom of the press, and magazines are allowed to write whatever they want. But this does not deprive them of the duty and the responsibility to look closely. Generalizations such as, the Greeks are cheating each other whenever they can, or the Greeks only work when they are bribed, are cheap.... This Greek-German conflict is fatal because its plays into the hands of populists on both sides, and makes the work of all those more

difficult who are trying to find a way out of the crisis. On the one hand, these are the EU governments that promised Athens support, and, on the other hand, there is the new Greek government that is doing its utmost and deserves a chance."

Die Welt (2/25) headlined: "Hysteria About Greece? - The Germans Are Right," and judged: "The Germans are increasingly less inclined to believe that Europe and the Euro is good for them. They are not alone with their skepticism. After the euro turned into a success story over the past ten years...the weak spots are now coming to the fore. It is becoming increasingly obvious that Europe only works under certain conditions but is unable to deal with crises such as the Greek one. There is no mechanism on how to bring to reason those who break the rules. That is why it is understandable why the Germans are suspicious when the euro zone and the European Union are getting bigger.... At stake is something that should be self-evident: Everyone who has paid into the social security system or into a savings contract should get back an acceptable amount of money in the end. This is not a trifle but a precondition for a functioning democracy."

Under the headline: "Greece and the Nazi Club," Tagesspiegel (2/25)

editorialized: "There seems to be a method behind swinging the Nazi club. Greece's Vice Prime Minister Pangelos' remark that his country was damaged during the Nazi occupation reminds us of the brazen calculation, which former Polish Prime Minister Kaczynski made two years ago. In the wrestling over voting rights in the EU, he called upon the EU to show consideration for the Poles killed in WW II. At that time as today, the goal of this lesson in history was the same: the rest of the EU - and primarily Germany - should be put under moral pressure. But none of the politicians responsible should accept this."

15. (Greece-EU) Austerity Program

Frankfurter Allgemeine (2/25) carried an editorial under the headline: "Strikes and Scapegoats," that "The situation is now getting serious in Greece: for the government that wants to implement a tough austerity policy, for the civil servants who are taking to the streets to fight for their privileges, and for the pensioners and the working people as a whole. But that's the way it is: the way out of the misery is not a carpet of flowers but a path full of thorns. Without fundamental adjustment, the country is faced with bankruptcy.... And the search for scapegoats is already under full swing. How inventive! If the government tried to save itself at such a level, then it will be difficult mobilizing political solidarity for Athens in the EU."

In a report on the strikes in Greece, Frankfurter Allgemeine (2/25) headlined: "Strikes in Greece less Vigorous," and wrote that "the public service and some sectors of the private economy are affected but only 22,000 people took to the streets." Handelsblatt (2/25) carried a lengthy article under the headline: "'The only people on strike are those for whom it does not matter whether they have a job.'" The daily reported: "It is not surprising that the call for strike has not meet with great success outside of the public service. According to a recent poll, eight out of ten Greeks think that the trade unions should do without strikes in view of the current crisis. And what is also miserable for the unions: as far as the media is concerned, the strikes did not get wide coverage because the journalists were on strike, too. That is why there were no broadcasts on TV or the radio."

16. (U.S.) Criticism of Google

FT Deutschland (2/25) editorialized: "It's now getting really serious for Google: the EU Commission wants to examine whether the U.S. company is misusing its dominant power to disadvantage competitors. Brussels' action is right and necessary because the suspicion that Google weighs down its competitors is justified... Brussels' involvement forces Google to fundamentally reconsider its behavior. The company has never thought that it is necessary to take others into consideration - particularly when it comes to data protection. It always required massive protests by users before the company improved its programs. Such a behavior earns you many enemies - and Google has more than enough of them."

In an editorial, Sddeutsche (2/25) highlighted that "the search engine does not take privacy rights seriously enough" and added: "The approach of the U.S. company to make all information the world has available on the internet is increasingly alarming politicians and consumer protectionists, particularly in Europe. Regardless of whether it is Google Street View, where everybody can pry into the garden of the neighbor, Google Book Search or its increasing market power, the concerns are justified. No company should hold all information there is.... While the company was liked initially, it is becoming increasingly unpopular in its second decade. The company must not grow at the expense of consumers. With Google's buzz service, the company demonstrated that technological opportunities are important, not the privacy rights of costumers.

This is the same with Street View.... Google does not take such considerations sufficiently into account. The company views those who oppose Street View as has-beens. However, leaving all information to just one company is too sensitive. Unfortunately, the competitors are weak. Against this background, politicians are right to tackle this issue."

Die Welt (2/24) editorialized on Google's Street View project, which the company plans to start in Germany this year: "Google Earth offers more opportunities than it poses dangers. Users can leave behind bookmarks on photos, which other users can use. Shops and restaurants attract costumers, landlords can find tenants. Those who go on vacation can check the resort before. False companies with faked addresses can be disclosed by one click. In the U.S., an entire service sector is developing around Google Earth. The loss of privacy is the price of the drastic increase in openness. Those who want absolute privacy must forbid maps - the way North Korea does it. This cannot be the answer to the offer to see the world as it is."

Tagesspiegel (2/24) opined: "Google Street View offers information that are not directed against anybody. Opportunities to misuse such information are not apparent. Gruesome garden gnomes have no right to be protected.... [Consumption Minister] Aigner has good intentions. She wants to protect us against the profit-mongering of a giant company. This is the usually reflex of somebody who is overly concerned-a minister who sees citizens as wards. Those who act like this prevent things. We imported the most important inventions and achievements of the internet industry. Google, Facebook, iPhone are all made in the United States. Isn't it rather sweet that the consumer protection minister wants to boycott these means and calls for a better world? Aigner's attack and attitude point at a country that should urgently discuss the sense of having street lights."

17. (Sudan) Peace Process

Under the headline: "In the Sudanese Quicksand," Sueddeutsche Zeitung (2/25) opined: "The agreement with the rebels in the West shifts influences in Africa's eternal civil war. For years, Omar al-Bashir has been pilloried as a warmonger in Darfur but now he is presenting himself as a prince of peace. To everyone's surprise his regime signed a peace agreement with his arch enemy, rebel leader Khalil Ibrahim. Ibrahim is now reaching out his hand and is pressing all other rebel groups to follow him. But this peace opening does not mean that reconciliation will occur in Darfur. Junta leader al-Bashir, who wants to legitimize his power with an election victory in April, urgently needs a diplomatic success. He was unable to militarily win the war in western Sudan; now time is pressing and he has now changed to negotiations. Only time will tell whether this was only a tactical move or a lasting change.... Pressure on Bashir also increased because the International Court of Justice issued an arrest warrant against him. Even though the regime demonstrates cohesiveness to the outside, Bashir's aides are looking for ways out of the isolation.... This cease-fire between the JEM and Khartoum is shifting weights in this conflict, whose alliances and frontlines were often unstable. But it is not the 'beginning of the end of the war,' which Bashir now wants to celebrate."

Under the headline: "Willingness for Peace for a Certain Period of Time," die tageszeitung (2/25) judged: "When the Sudanese government and the largest rebel movement in Darfur sign a peace agreement, then this sounds promising but skepticism is appropriate. The

political calculations on both sides are too obvious. Sudan's President al-Bashir needs quiet at the Darfur front, while the agreement is a triumph for the JEM rebel movement for the time being -- JEM leader Ibrahim is the winner. He is now Khartoum's partner

for peace and is allowed to continue talks with the Sudanese government about a political solution. This is not bad in view of the fact that the JEM conducted the talks from a position of weakness. But both sides do not have a joint interest in peace. They remain rivals in Sudan's domestic policy and primarily in Darfur. Their war has now been suspended for the time being but the next round [of clashes] is programmed."

18. (Western Hemisphere) Latin America Summit

Die Welt (2/25) headlined: "Latin America Shows the U.S. the Red Card," and reported: "New Organization to Reduce U.S. influence - Washington's Allies Also Approve it. The participants in the Latin America summit agreed to push regional integration and this without the United States. The regional powers of Mexico and Brazil advocated the new forum - hoping to strengthen their leading roles. Even though President Obama's Latin America advisor Arturo Valenzuela said that Washington would not be opposed to such a new organization, the decision is, nevertheless, a setback for President Obama who promised last year a new era in relations between the U.S. and Latin America. But Washington's faltering attitude towards the violent coup in Honduras and the establishment of military bases in Colombia against the will of the neighboring countries, however, quickly blurred relations again. The OAS that was founded in 1948 and has its seat in Washington is now threatened with a further loss of significance. But time must tell whether the new regional fora will be able to cope with the new challenges."

19. (Turkey) Military Officials Arrested

Frankfurter Allgemeine (2/15) commented: "The arrest of 49 Turkish officers is the current climax of a battle led with legal means between Prime Minister Erdogan's government party AKP and the military caste which sees itself as the guardian of Kemal Ataturk's secular republic. It is difficult to imagine that Turkish judges would order so many arrests without having any suspicion. However, there are also voices saying that the religious-political camp is striking back for the attempt of the opposition to forbid the governing party. More than 200 Turks, who have apparently planned a coup in the name of the nationalistic organization Ergenekon, are already on trial.... It is clear that the polarization within Turkey has not diminished, but is probably still increasing."

10. (Defense) A 400 M

Frankfurter Allgemeine (2/25) editorialized on its front page: "The A 400 M is one of these projects that are too big to fail. This applies particularly to the company EADS, which could have postponed for a long time - or even had to give up - its ambition to get a foot on the ground of the military armament business. The threat to cancel the project was therefore not credible. However, the 'too big to fail' also applies to the countries that ordered the plane. The political damage would have been too big to abandon the project simply because the producer cannot meet the agreement. At the end of the day, this is also about the competitiveness of a European airspace company, in which the countries have a stake."

MURPHY